

**UNISON**  
**PROFESSIONAL SERVICES OFFICER**  
**PROFESSIONAL SERVICES UNIT**  
**REGIONAL MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE DIRECTORATE**

**JOB BRIEF**

**BACKGROUND**

Across UNISON members who are registered with professional registration bodies is growing. The effect of these changes is to substantially increase the demand for representing members who have been reported to their professional body for some breach of their fitness to practise. In these cases people can face allegations surrounding misconduct, their health or competence.

UNISON has 250,000 members who are registered with statutory or voluntary registers and the numbers are increasing every year as more professions are registered. One of the nine UK health regulatory bodies the majority of UNISON members are regulated by the NMC & HCPC, that includes nurses, midwives, nursing associates, paramedics, operating department practitioner, occupational therapists, social workers, care workers and pharmacy assistants to name but a few. Advice, support and representation is also needed in relation to safeguarding allegations across the UK.

Professional Services Unit also represents and advises on social care and other cases in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

**THE ROLE OF THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES OFFICER**

The post holder will be responsible for the day to day management of their allocated registration cases and the advocacy of each of them. You will have the opportunity to meet some of our regions and may be required to help in PSU training for other UNISON staff and branches. As a member of our team you will be a point of contact to offer advice to regional staff advising on a wide range of issues affecting registered professions including Independent Safeguarding Authority cases and Social Care Tribunal Appeals. In particular, the post holder will liaise with the registration bodies on their cases and will advise the Head of Professional Services on policy issues arising from that work.

- Responsibility for the day to day management of your own fitness to practice case load. This will include responding to the different stages of

the case, preparing statements, submission and acting as the members advocate at hearings.

- You will have excellent written and verbal communication skills, be able to prioritise your time effectively meeting deadlines including submission ones which may not be always inside your control
- Representing UNISON, in discussions with registration bodies, other unions and professional organisations Health and Local Government Employers, the Department of Health and the Department for Education.
- Assisting Learning And Organising Services in the development of learning materials and curriculum, specific to fitness to practice cases;
- Assisting the development of UNISON regional staff and branch officers within health or local government in representing fitness to practice cases.

## **SOCIAL CARE TRIBUNAL**

We have a limited number of appeals to the Social Care Tribunal and to the High Court. The Professional Services Officer will advise in such cases and in the case of the Social Care Tribunal may be the advocate for the case.

## **THE PROTOCOL**

UNISON has a protocol (which is subject to review) on handling fitness to practice cases which can be found on the website under the Professional Services page. This defines the role and responsibility of branches, regions and the Professional Services Unit when processing cases.

## **UNISON**

### **PROFESSIONAL SERVICES OFFICER** **PROFESSIONAL SERVICES UNIT** **REGIONAL MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE DIRECTORATE**

#### **JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Grade:** 3

**Hours:** 35 per week

**Location:** UNISON Centre, 130 Euston Road London NW1

**Reports to:** National Manager – Regional Management & Governance

#### **OVERALL SUMMARY**

The post holder will be responsible for the day to day management of their own registration cases and their advocacy. The post will also include training regional staff and lay activists in the registration bodies' processes and advising regions on a wide range of issues effecting registered professions including Vetting and Barring cases and Social Care Tribunal Appeals. In particular, the post holder will liaise with the principal registration bodies on conduct and health cases and will advise the Head of Professional Services on policy issues arising from that work.

#### **KEY TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Representing members appearing before statutory registration bodies, Social Care Tribunals, Independent Safeguarding Authority.
- Responsibility for the day to day management of the fitness to practice case work. This will include managing the case preparation, responding to the different investigatory stages, developing submissions, scheduling of cases ensuring cases commitments are met; and advocacy at hearings
- Representing UNISON, in discussions/ negotiations with registration bodies, other unions and professional organisations Health and Local Government Employers, the Department of Health and the Department for Education;
- Advising Regional Staff representing UNISON members in disciplinary or dismissal appeal hearings which relate to their conduct, health or competence as a registered professional.

- Assisting LAOS in the development of learning materials and curriculum, specific to fitness to practice cases;
- Assisting HR in the development of staff advocacy courses;
- Assisting the development of UNISON regional staff and branch officers within health or local government in representing fitness to practice cases.

### **Communication / Co-ordination**

- To work with professional bodies at national and regional level to improve UNISON's involvement in professional issues;
- To work with partner organisations to ensure complementary activity;
- To work with branches, regions and service groups to establish a team of staff and activists able to represent and/or advise members facing action against them by registration bodies;
- To consult with appropriate bodies to foster commitment to developing UNISON's professional services;
- To advise and represent UNISON members subject to registration bodies fitness to practice processes:
- To advise and represent UNISON members subject to Social Care Tribunals.
- To develop, write and implement the protocols for FtP and Vetting and Barring cases

### **Specialist / Technical**

- To commission learning materials with an emphasis on fitness to practice cases;
- To act as advocate in fitness to practice cases with a variety of registration bodies;
- To consider how learning programmes on fitness to practice can be applied in a workplace setting through partnerships with employers and regions;
- Administrative and clerical support is provided but the Professional Services Officer will initiate correspondence relating to fitness to practice cases.
- To develop the CASE system for FtP cases

**Financial**

- Prepare annual budget submissions for fitness to practice activity;
- Monitor the budget to ensure appropriate financial systems are followed.

**General**

- To undertake such other tasks appropriate to the grade and nature of the post as may be decided from time to time.

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**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

UNISON is an equal opportunity employer, committed to providing equal opportunities regardless of race, marital status, gender, sexuality, disablement or age. This person specification is designed to help members of the interviewing panel judge the qualities of the interviewees in a systematic and consistent way and in accordance with UNISON's Equal Opportunities Policies. .

**Strategic/Development**

- Commitment to and understanding of equal opportunities.
- Commitment to and understanding of UNISON's aims and values.

**Managerial**

- Experience of developing and implementing work programmes including setting standards, monitoring and evaluating progress.
- Ability to manage and prioritise work under pressure.
- Ability to act as an advocate at tribunal level.

**Financial**

- Ability to monitor and control budget.
- Ability to ensure value for money and the effective use of resources.

**Administrative**

- Ability to plan and organise a complex programme of work.
- Ability to maintain accurate administrative systems.
- IT literate with an ability to understand and use both industry and specialist software.

**Communication/Co-ordination**

- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Ability to represent UNISON in relations with outside bodies.
- Ability to communicate effectively using writing and presentation skills
- Ability to network effectively
- Ability to tutor relevant courses for full time staff and lay activists

**Specialist/Technical**

- Specialist expertise in aspects of fitness to practice advocacy
- A knowledge of registration bodies and their fitness to practice processes
- A knowledge of issues and practices relating to a range of registered professionals
- An understanding of registration requirements in health and other public sector employment areas
- An understanding of the role of professional bodies and trade unions

**General**

- Ability to work quickly to high standards of accuracy and quality
- Ability to work on own initiative and to prioritise work under pressure
- To work as part of a team, be flexible to meet the needs of UNISON members.